

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE COUNCIL'S REPORT

1. The ninety-seventh meeting of the Fort George G. Meade Retiree Council was held at building 2234 Huber Road, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, at 9:00 a.m. on 27 August 2005. In accordance with AR 600-8-7, this report of the meeting is submitted:

a. The following members were present:

COL Bert L. Rice, USA Ret (Chairman)
SGM Kenneth L. McCall Sr., USA Ret (Co-Chairman)
COL Charles M. Shadle, USA Ret (APG)
COL Edward H, Uemura, USA Ret
LTC Jeanette Hammond, USA Ret
LTC Louis Schneider, USA Ret
LtCdr Sam L. Bridwell, Sr., USN Ret (Western Maryland)
MAJ William S. Heath, USA Ret
CPT Arthur N. Rogers, III, USA Ret
CW2 Ricky Godbolt, USA Ret
SFC Carlo DePorto, USA Ret
MSGT Charles E. Plummer, USAF Ret
SFC James L. Wafer, USA Ret (new member)
SSG Walter B. Hollman, Sr., USA Ret
Mrs Catherine Eckford
Mrs Cecille Morse

2. The meeting was called to order with a welcome from COL Rice. The invocation was given by SFC DePorto, followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance led by SGM McCall.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: COL Rice reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2005, which was accepted by the Council. He also introduced the following guest:

a. COL Kenneth O. McCreedy, Installation Commander, who extended his personal welcome and thanked all for their participation in the program emphasizing the successes that have been achieved because of our involvement. He stated that he and his staff will continue to provide the support needed to accomplish the mission of both entities and will ensure that the Council's voice will continue to be heard. Additionally, he will work to ensure increase interaction between the active and retired military communities. (COL McCreedy remained with the meeting to address any concerns that he could respond to.)

b. Mr. Frank M. Macias, Fort Meade Commissary, who reported on the following:

(1) The case lot sale that will be held on 16, 17, and 18 September 2005, to coincide with the Retiree Appreciation Day weekend at Fort Meade.

(2) There were three (3) local winners from the Commissary Scholarship Program

(3) A free concert featuring a popular country music star will be held at the McGill Center on 13 September 2005.

Note: LTC Hammond inquired as to the possible upgrading of the Organic food section. He will address same.

c. Mr. Anthony J. Barber, USA Ret, Military Personnel Division, introduced himself stating that he was sitting in for COL Cullen, Installation Adjutant, who was unable to attend the meeting. He stated that he would ensure that COL Cullen would receive all pertinent information discussed at this meeting.

d. Ms. Jennie Funderburke, Health Benefits Advisor, KACC, who reported on the following and provided information packets relative to:

- Tricare Prime
- Tricare for Life
- Enrollment procedures for both.

NOTE: LtCdr Bridwell remarked that Tricare has websites and some require a password to enter. Passwords to same can be obtained by calling Tricare.

4. RSO REMARKS: Mr. Ashley reported on the following:

a. That he attended the world-wide Retired Services Officer conference.

b. Information has been provided to Sound Off relative to the RAD weekend activities.

c. Issues for the Army Chief of Staff Council are due by 3 December 2005.

d. Items for the retiree newsletter are also due by 3 December 2005.

5. OLD BUSINESS: COL Rice reported on the action being taken to re-introduce into the Maryland General Assembly, legislation to eliminate taxation of retired military pay at the local levels. SGM McCall added that there was a need for military retirees living in the state, their family members, veteran service organizations and active duty to get involved. Writing letters to their state delegates and senators would help, but personal visits or a show of unity would be even better.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. COL McCreedy reported on Fort Meade's Blood Drive and thanked the military retired community for their past and the need for their continued support. Donations are used overseas in support of our deployed troops and some of the supply is used within our region. There are restrictions on donations and the American Red Cross should be contacted to learn of them.

b. COL Rice remarked on the following:

(1) Survivors Benefit Plan and its "open season" that begins on 1 October 2005. Those eligible to participate or want to increase their contributions, should take advantage of the same.

(2) Certain organizations are pushing to eliminate some of the benefits military retirees receive. He asked that we alert the veteran services organizations that many belong to and work together to defeat their attacks.

(3) He reiterated the need to submit items for review by the Army Chief of Staffs Council, by 3 December 2005.

c. SGM McCall reported on the following:

(1) Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Mustard Gas Outreach Program. Veterans that were exposed to chemical weapons or mustard gas, should contact the DVA at telephone number 1-800-749-8387 or on-line (www.vba.va.gov) to register. Many that attended CBR courses during 1950 through 1970, may have had a drop of mustard gas applied to their skin to demonstrate its effect and how blisters formed in the lungs if it's inhaled. He urged that this information be shared with others.

(2) DOD Identification Cards for age 75 plus. Congress passed legislation recently authorizing services to issue ID cards without an established expiration date to those dependents and survivors of military retirees who are aged 75 years or older. (When first reported, software was not available to support the program. Since then, Army Echoes has reported that the program has been implemented and eligible persons should check with their local Retired Services Officers.)

(3) DVA Registries Update. Veterans may be eligible to be placed on one or more DVA Registries that are administered at DVA Health Care Systems (not DVA Regional Offices). The veteran must "request" to be placed on the respective Registry(s) and that the advantage for doing same, is under the Registry, AT NO COST. Being on an applicable Registry and being treated for Registry ailment/diseases, could assist in future claims. The following Registries are maintained by the DVA; ATOMIC VETERANS, AGENT ORANGE, SHAD (Shipboard Hazard and Defense), and GULF I. For further information, call your local DVA office, or visit on-line at www.va.gov.

NOTE: Source of some information extracted from RAO Bulletin.

7. APG UPDATE:

a. COL Shadle reported on their upcoming RAD (22 October 2005) that will include support from the installation band, dining facility and include exhibitors. He also mentioned:

(1) The Post Exchange renovations that is underway.

(2) BRAC results and its impact on the installation and community. APG will lose some military billets, but will gain many other billets created by the relocation of others affected by closures.

(3) Status of their museum is in question. b. CSM Decker in response to SGM McCall's question relative to the impact the losses may have on the APG credit union, he stated that it would be slight due mainly to their large member-owner base.

b. COL McCreedy also commented on the BRAC's affect at APG.

8. WESTERN MARYLAND UPDATE: LtCdr Bridwell reported that:

a. RAD for Carlisle Barracks is scheduled for 17 September 2005 and that Fort Detrick's would be held in October 2005.

b. Fort Ritchie's status remains in litigation.

c. A program relative to Self Help for the Hearing Impaired, is proving to be successful.

9. KIMBROUGH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

a. COL Uemura reported:

(1) That a Health Care Consortium held on 15 June 2005, was not well attended by installation Mayors, unit representatives, and others which affected the success of the program.

(2) Orthopedic service is coming to KACC and will be located in a wing of the facility.

(3) A Weight Training program is being initiated that will include programs for the older retiree and their family member.

(4) A civilian contracted Radiologist is being added to the KACC staff.

(5) On the changeover in computer service in February 2006 and that there will be minimal impact to the operation in KACC.

(6) Pharmacy operation changes that will affect prescription refill procedures and a before 10 am and after 3 pm dispensing.

b. COL McCreedy remarked on the above providing rationale for the changes, etc.

10. ARMY FAMILY ADVISORY BOARD: Mrs Morse reported on the following:

a. The Survivor Spouse Benefit Symposium conducted on 11 June 2005, was well received, well attended and many stated that the symposium should be conducted annually. Support from the installation was outstanding. SGM McCall suggested that we meet to address "lessons learned" and to consider conducting it at a larger facility.

b. The AFAP is scheduled for March 2006 and questions are being compiled that will be addressed at same. If the Council is planning to submit any, they should be related to "quality of life", "installation operations", or the like. COL Rice mentioned that many of these items are reviewed at the Army Chief of Staff level.

c. A conference on Dentistry was held recently and included military representatives. A question pertaining to having DAV service veterans only (those that are disabled), and not military retirees was addressed. Responses to the question were not available.

11. FORT MEADE COMMISSARY COUNCIL: Mrs Eckford reported that she had nothing to add to Mr. Macias' remarks.

12. CO-CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: SGM McCall remarked on the following:

a. His appointment by Maryland Governor Robert Ehrlich to serve as a member of the Task Force for the establishment of a Maryland's Women's Veterans Monument honoring those women from Maryland who served in the Uniformed Services of America. Its purpose is to recommend a location, identify funding, construction and design for the monument. He chairs the Location Committee. COL McCreedy mentioned the conversation that he and SGM McCall had relative to the possible sitting of the monument at Fort Meade,

b. The presentation made to Ms. Jammie Miller, a teacher at MacArthur Middle School, prior to her departure and acceptance of a teaching position in another jurisdiction. Citations, honors, tokens of appreciation and other items are bestowed upon her by members of the Retiree Council for her work in bringing the "Living Veterans Project" to the classroom and youth therein. She was extremely appreciative of the farewell given to her. COL McCreedy stated that we should work to extend the program to other area schools.

c. The concern expressed by retirees that with the expected closing of Walter Reed, will bus transportation be provided from Fort Meade to Bethesda Naval Hospital? COL McCreedy assured the Council that the service would continue.

d. That Fort Meade is hosting the quarterly meeting of the Maryland Veterans Commission at Club Meade, on 25 October 2005. COL McCreedy is a guest speaker.

e. The Maryland Department of Affairs will submit an article for our newsletter.

f. Announced the Council's meeting schedule for the remainder of 2005:

Saturday - 3 December

NOTE: Tentative for 2006:

Saturday - 4 March

Saturday - 3 June

Saturday - 30 September

Saturday - 9 December

13. GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION:

a. COL McCreedy addressed the affect of BRAC on Fort Meade, and the increase in personnel, building and activities that it brings. He stated that the challenge is to ensure that everyone's needs are met to include the county and state as everyone works together in this one common cause.

b. CW2 Godbolt provided an update on the Council's web page that he is developing and the permission that is needed from the installation before it can be placed into operation. He was thanked for his endeavor.

c. Msgt Plummer remarked on the Rockenbach Road speed problem and that an effort should be made to control same. COL McCreedy is to address this concern.

d. SGM McCall reminded all of the assistance required to support the RAD; the donation of gifts as door prizes; and thanked the Council for their dedicated work and attendance.

14. The meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m. with a reminder that the next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Saturday, 9:00 a.m., 3 December 2005, at 2234 Huber Road, Fort Meade.

BERT L. RICE
COL, USA Ret
Chairman, Fort Meade
Retiree Council

KENNETH L. MCCALL, SR.
SGM, USA Ret
Co-Chairman, Fort Meade
Retiree Council